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16 August 1955

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

16 August 1955

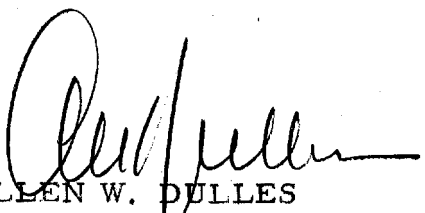
MEMORANDUM FOR: The Executive Secretary,
The National Security Council

SUBJECT : Status of the Foreign Intelligence Program

1. This report has been prepared pursuant to Presidential directive as forwarded to the Director of Central Intelligence by the Executive Secretary, National Security Council, by memorandum dated 1 July 1955. Primary reference has been made to national security policy objectives applicable to the intelligence community as set forth in NSC 5501.

2. The intelligence community was recently investigated by the Clark Task Force of the Hoover Commission. The findings of the Commission, which are presently under advisement, are not covered or commented on in this report. The comments of the organizations reported on are being transmitted separately to the White House in accordance with customary procedure.

3. This report was concurred in by the Intelligence Advisory Committee on 16 August 1955.


ALLEN W. DULLES
Director

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ANNUAL REPORT TO THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
ON THE STATUS OF THE FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE
PROGRAM AS OF 30 JUNE 1955

SUMMARY

Evaluation of US Capabilities to Provide Warning of Attack

We believe, as we did at the time of our previous report, that the US could expect possibly as much as six months and not less than 30 days warning of Soviet preparation for full-scale land, sea, and air attack, providing that the Soviets went to full, or nearly full mobilization prior to the attack.

The current estimate of the growing air capabilities of the USSR has made us somewhat more pessimistic than we were last year regarding our ability to give advance intelligence warning of surprise air attack. Should the USSR attempt a major surprise air attack against the US from forward bases in 1955, the preparations might be detected, and if they were, would provide a generalized degree of warning of several days, and specific warning of unusual and possibly threatening air activity [REDACTED] hours. A lesser scale of attack, involving a [REDACTED] accompanied by an extraordinary security effort could be launched as early as 1955 with no assurance of specific advance warning to US intelligence (apart from that provided by early warning radar). Attacks against US bases or forces overseas, or against US allies, could be made with equal or greater likelihood of being accomplished without advance warning.

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In the period between now and 1958, Soviet capabilities for surprise attacks will almost certainly increase. Furthermore, the USSR will have a progressively increasing capability for launching attacks on the US from interior Soviet bases. Such a method of attack would probably provide no specific advance warning to US intelligence.

The USAF now operates world-wide on a 24-hour basis an Indications System for detecting imminent Communist attacks, especially air attack with nuclear weapons. Major air commands have subsidiary centers tied in with Washington by preferential use channels of communication for flash transmission of early warning intelligence. This system is in turn tied in with the unified command indications centers and with the National Indications Center in Washington, which is maintained on a 24-hour basis by the Watch Committee of the IAC.

Evaluation of Soviet Capabilities and Intentions

Intelligence to support over-all assessments of the strengths of the USSR, Communist China, and the Satellites is generally improving. The general limitations of intelligence on the USSR are evident in the process of attempting to measure the forces shaping Soviet policy. We can illuminate the broad outlines of the chief problems confronting Soviet leadership, but we are still unable to determine the degree to which these problems, such as allocation of Soviet economic resources and German rearmament, generate pressures on Soviet policy. The main questions of political intelligence often involve matters of judgment on which little or no factual evidence can be brought to bear -- the degree of independence enjoyed by Communist China in matters of major policy, the degree of likelihood that the USSR will withdraw from East Germany, the likelihood of open intervention by the USSR in hostilities between the US and Communist China which threatened the existence of the latter.

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We have made progress in economic intelligence on the USSR, most notably in improving techniques for measuring economic growth. However, there remains the basic problem, that of determining the extent to which the Soviet economy is capable of meeting the competing claims for resources arising from the various internal and external commitments of Soviet policy. In an effort to find some solution to this problem, we have recently focused attention on a particularly difficult aspect of intelligence on Soviet resources allocation, the estimated economic cost of the over-all Soviet military effort.

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Although we have succeeded in collecting much information on the separate branches of the Soviet armed forces, we have yet to construct the picture of probable Soviet strategy so essential to estimating general trends in the Soviet military establishment, probable Soviet choices in weapons systems, or the strength of particular military components. The requirement for such estimates is particularly urgent at the present time because of recent indications that Soviet military thinking is adjusting to the impact of modern military technology.

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IAC-D-55/9
30 June 1955

INTELLIGENCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Intelligence Advisory Committee
The Chairmen, IAC Subcommittees
Deputy Director/Plans/CIA

SUBJECT : Semi-Annual Report to the NSC on the
Status of Foreign Intelligence Program
for the Period 1 January - 30 June 1955

1. As a preliminary to the preparation of a draft subject report for IAC consideration, you are requested to submit written contributions of items which you believe should be included in this report.

2. You will recall that the last report submitted (IAC-D-55/8 (Final) 1 March 1955), was quite comprehensive and took considerable time to coordinate. I believe that the current report should be limited to highlights, i. e., significant items concerning intelligence successes or failures, progress or lack thereof in key intelligence programs.

3. We would appreciate receipt of your contribution by 15 July.

Secretary

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